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Chairman Marvin Abney
House Committee on Finance
Rhode Island State House
Room 35
82 Smith St.
Providence, RI 02903

3/22/2021

ATTN: Christopher O'Brien, Committee Clerk

AGAINST House Bill 5193 - Establishment of Charter Schools

Dear Chairman Abney and Members of the House Committee on Finance:

My name is Alexandra De La Zerda and I live in the city of Providence/ North Providence. I am writing to express my **strong opposition to Representative O'Brien's bill, H-5193**, regarding charter schools.

I am a proud Central Falls student alumni and past resident that is now a Middle School Social Worker at Segue Institute for Learning, a charter school located in Central Falls, my home. Before diving into the field of social work and education for the past 3 years at Segue IFL, I was a student seeking for the American Dream. It was my duty as a first generation to advance my education and break the stigma. I did not want to be another statistic in my generation rather I wanted to leave behind a legacy. As I was living in the city of Central Falls, my family and I did not have access to educational resources or opportunities. Choices were not given. Our journey became much more difficult than anyone can imagine. We were one of few families that overcame barriers and achieved success as a family; *Si se puede, yes it can be done and yes I can.*

Transportation, school lunch program eligibility, child care, school enrollment for siblings are some out of many...many... factors that my classmates have faced. While working at Segue Institute for learning as a student-intern, I was emotionally speechless of how far Central Falls grew in just a few years. I have witnessed the unconditional love and support given by staff and administrators to students and families; wishing that my classmates and I had a similar experience. Segue staff and administrators continue to work tirelessly from teaching in classrooms to packaging food deliveries for families. During my time at Segue IFL, our building remained open for the community. I am proud to say that we do more than what our job description states. We treat our students and families like our own. *Nosotros somos familia por siempre, we are forever family.* The level of support, hardwork and dedication that we continue

to blossom into the classrooms cannot be matched. I am reaching out for your support in opposing Senate Bill S-13 and House Bill H-5193 which would establish a three-year moratorium on the expansion of charter schools in Rhode Island.

Segue Institute for Learning is a community-based charter school founded in 2006, serving students in grades 3-8 from the City of Central Falls. Our educational philosophy to increase the high school graduation, college-going, and college persistence rates for Rhode Island's low-income and first-generation students. Our school works diligently to provide a rigorous academic program with targeted intervention to ensure that all students are prepared for success. In addition to its strong academic programming, Segue engages families to be active participants in their child's education through an open classroom policy and extensive outreach to families.

Central Falls is an urban community predominantly of color where families are demanding more opportunities to enroll their children in charter schools. I am encouraging you to please consider opposing this bill. History does not need to repeat itself unless you allow it by agreeing to this bill and leaving many families behind, like my former classmates, with limited educational resources/choices and promising job opportunities for them to grow, personally and professionally. Our future generation deserves more than a seat. They deserve equal access to high quality education and a promising future for themselves and their families.

Please oppose House Bill 5193 and let our children pursue the high-quality education they deserve.

Thank you for your time and consideration on this matter. I hope this helps you understand the issue at hand. If you need more information, please feel free to reach out to me at any time.

Respectfully,
Alexandra De La Zerda
